



# Unbroken Gestures

29 August – 29 September 2024

ART SPACE ON THE CONCOURSE



LEFT: Dacchi Dang, *Morning light on Biota Street*, 2009, black and white photograph on silver gelatine  
Image courtesy of the Artist

# Unbroken Gestures

29 AUGUST – 29 SEPTEMBER 2024

Discover the profound impact of rituals on culture, community and daily life.

## ARTISTS

Dacchi Dang

Shahroud Ghahani

WeiZen Ho

Mehwish Iqbal

Marikit Santiago

Phaptawan Suwannakudt

Jayanto Tan

Truc Truong

Katie Louise Williams

**Unbroken Gestures** is a Willoughby City Council exhibition co-curated by Cassandra Hard Lawrie and Faye Chen.

**Unbroken Gestures** is part of Emerge Festival 2024, presented by Willoughby City Council.

The Emerge Festival is a celebration of creativity and the hidden gems in the Willoughby area. With over 50 events celebrating arts and culture, the festival focuses on creative arts, entertainment, lifestyle and outdoor activities.

COVER IMAGE: Shahroud Ghahani, *Ardent Mother (detail)*, 2024, paper collage and mixed media on board. Image courtesy of the Artist

**EMERGE**  
FESTIVAL 2024

# Unbroken Gestures

**Discover the profound impact of rituals on culture, community and daily life.**

This exhibition examines the profound impact of rituals on culture, community and daily life. It also explores the deeply personal ways individuals can create and enact their own ritual practices. Rooted in spirituality, social connections, politics and personal significance, rituals transcend daily routines—seamlessly blending into our lives and prompting nuanced discussions about their transformative potential.

*Unbroken Gestures* invites contemplation of the transcendent nature of rituals and the established sequences of actions that exceed our daily limits. It offers a philosophical journey, recognising how rituals profoundly alter our perceptions and essence. Explore these artistic expressions to reflect on the metaphysical dimensions of rituals and their enduring impact—prompting a deep re-evaluation of our experiences.



ABOVE: Truc Truong, *Have a Supreme Day, 2024*, video still  
Image courtesy of the Artist

# Unbroken Gestures: Rituals as Acts of Cultural Preservation and Transformation

Rituals, as articulated by the ethnographer and folklorist Arnold Van Gennep and further developed by cultural anthropologist Victor Turner, are not merely remnants of tradition but dynamic forces that shape both communities and individual lives. Van Gennep suggested that “rites accompany every change of place, state, social position and age”<sup>1</sup>, highlighting the fundamental role of rituals in marking significant life transitions. Building on this foundation, Turner introduces the concept of the ‘liminal phase’—a transitional period during these rites of passage where old identities dissolve and new ones emerge<sup>2</sup>. ***Unbroken Gestures*** explores how these rituals, deeply embedded in the fabric of society, not only preserve cultural heritage but also drive transformation. This exhibition underscores their enduring influence, prompting reflection on how rituals impact various dimensions of life, including spirituality, social connections, politics and identity.

On the land now known as Australia, a confluence of diverse cultures, races, and beliefs creates a rich tapestry of shared and evolving practices. Phaptawan Suwannakudt reimagines ancient rituals of existence, rebirth and ordination, drawing from her Thai Buddhist experiences. By integrating these spiritual practices into an Australian context, she illustrates how cultural memory is

both preserved and transformed in new environments, reflecting Turner’s notion that rituals adapt to sustain relevance across different cultures. Extending this exploration beyond Australia, Katie Louise Williams’ ritual of releasing culturally significant flowers into the Vienne River, France symbolises a profound spiritual connection with nature, demonstrating the universal resonance of rituals that transcend individual contexts and resonate globally.

Beyond spirituality, rituals are embedded in the everyday practices that bind communities. Jayanto Tan’s installations focus on the domestic acts of cooking and tea-drinking, and reveal how these seemingly mundane routines both cultivate a sense of belonging and sustain cultural continuity within immigrant communities. His work highlights the role of ritual in reinforcing social ties, particularly in diasporic contexts where maintaining cultural identity is both a personal and collective endeavour. Similarly, WeiZen Ho interrogates the nexus between food and cultural memory, employing traditional ingredients such as turmeric and butterfly pea flowers in ritualistic performances. Ho not only evokes cultural identity but also elucidates the mechanisms through which food-related practices preserve and transmit heritage across generations.

The political dimensions of ritual are poignantly captured by Truc Truong and Marikit Santiago. Truong’s exploration of Vietnamese mourning processions, using rooster imagery and global brand metaphors, reveals a tension between tradition and modernity, shedding light on how political forces shape cultural practices and identities. Marikit Santiago juxtaposes religious iconography with modern celebrity culture, critiquing societal norms and entrenched gender roles, reflecting ongoing struggles for identity and representation in contemporary society. Both artists’ works not only reflect how culture is shaped by political forces but also demonstrate their deep engagement with issues of power and identity within social structures.

Through evocative imagery, the works of Dacchi Dang, Shahroud Ghahani, and Mehwish Iqbal explore the intricate layers of personal identity within the framework of cultural rituals. Dang’s use of a pinhole camera captures the cultural memories of Vietnamese immigrants in Australia, portraying their efforts to preserve cultural identity amid the challenges of displacement. This process mirrors the liminal phase, where old identities are reconsidered and adapted in a foreign environment. Ghahani’s exploration of maternal bonds highlights their foundational role in shaping both personal and cultural identity, echoing deep-seated traditions that transcend

generations. Iqbal’s investigation of death connects the individual to broader cultural histories, illustrating the tactile and visual transmission of memory and transformation, central to the human experience across cultures. Collectively, these works reveal the ongoing reconstruction and evolution of identity within diverse cultural contexts, embodying the enduring power of rituals.

***Unbroken Gestures*** celebrates the profound impact of rituals in shaping, preserving, and transforming identities and cultures. The artists featured in this exhibition reveal how rituals navigate, adapt, and thrive in an ever-evolving world, prompting reflection on their enduring influence in our lives.

Faye Chen  
Co-Curator

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1. Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 3.

2. Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing, 1969), 94.

# Dacchi Dang

*Full Circle* series, 2009, black and white photography on silver gelatine fibre base paper

## ABOUT THE ARTWORK

The *Full Circle* series was developed during my residency at Metro Arts in Brisbane, capturing my personal experience as a Chinese Vietnamese Australian reflecting on cultural memory within the suburban landscape of Inala, Brisbane.

Inala, known for its Vietnamese community, provided a rich backdrop for examining cultural identity and ritual practices. Initially unfamiliar with the area, I began this project with few expectations about how the community's presence would reveal itself. As I navigated the suburbs, Vietnamese temples, churches, and bilingual commercial signs emerged as symbolic markers of cultural identity and the rituals that sustain it.

Home is a deeply personal space that offers safety and comfort. This work explores the liminal spaces between the private and public lives of the Vietnamese diaspora through the lens of a handmade pinhole camera. The plain suburban facades in Inala mirror the simple structure of the pinhole camera, symbolising the ongoing

re-imagination and recreation of a lost or idealised homeland. For refugees, returning to their former countries is often impossible, and moving from their new homeland can symbolically or literally sever ties with their past. This connection manifests in the interior spaces of their homes, where rituals express cultural identity and forge ties to heritage and history.

The landscape images in the *Full Circle* series, created with a pinhole camera, highlight the importance of inner space, encouraging contemplation of the connections between interior and exterior worlds. This relationship mirrors the experiences of individuals in diaspora, where rituals transcend daily limits and foster profound connections. The pinhole camera thus becomes a metaphor for examining the metaphysical dimensions of home, shelter and memory, emphasising the transformative potential of rituals in altering perceptions and essence.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

I was born in Saigon, Vietnam, and currently live and work in Sydney. I am a photographic artist, specialising in black and white photography and alternative photographic processes. Visual art is my language.

I have participated in a number of Artist in Residency programmes nationally and internationally including Parramatta Artist Studio; Ainslie + Gorman Arts Centers; Bundanon Trust; Hæfliger Cottage, Hill End; Metro Arts, Brisbane; Peel Island; Art Space; Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris; Performing Arts Forum (PAF) Research & Development, St Erme, France; Geidai University of Fine Arts, Tokyo and Ueno Town Museum, Tokyo.

My works are held in both public collections including: Australian War Memorial, Bundanon Trust Collection, NSW; Sherman Gallery, Sydney; Horsham Regional Gallery, Victoria; Shanghai Educational Publishing House, China; and private collections in Australia, Europe and Hong Kong.



LEFT: Dacchi Dang, *Faith I*, 2009, black and white photograph on silver gelatine fibre base paper  
Image courtesy of the Artist

# Shahroud Ghahani

*Ardent Mother*, 2024, paper collage and mixed media on board with timber poles with inlaid embossed brass and rhinestone

## ABOUT THE ARTWORK

Rituals are embedded in all cultures; they are repeatedly performed in our everyday life. Although some are intrinsically more spiritual and significant than others.

One of the oldest rituals in human history and in all living cultures, could be found in the individualistic and mysterious mother and child union and a unique bond that is almost impossible to break apart.

*Ardent Mother* is a surrealist ode to the mysticism of maternal rituals from the birth of a child.

The new mother is taught how to breastfeed and control the flow of milk and soothe the untrained little baby's mouth to grasp it. To cradle the baby tight to comfort her, and care and comfort her by cuddling her to make her heartbeat heard for the familial sound of the womb and in private sanctum of her embrace.

The nights awake, the lullaby, the bathing and the caressing of her cherished little being is an act of love—invisible yet repeatedly and religiously dedicated steps. However is not just repeated routine but some highly elevated mindful act of worship and sacrifice.

These artworks show mothers in their natural state, elated and engaged.

The profusion of images in these three artworks also explores the multi-layered significance of symbols and hybrid cultural identities. For example, the Lily flower has significant meanings both in Christianity and Zoroastrian traditions. The pearls also have deep symbolic meanings of both concealment and purity in many cultures. Gold paint is used as a precious currency elevating the state of this almost holy relationship between a mother and child.

In the allegorical symbols of the artwork, I have referenced the spiritual and religious role of the mother, drawing from visual references of art from different religions and culture. I wished too to highlight the creative power of motherhood, the idea that the womb holds magic, this is reflected in the circular format of the artwork, and the blooming flower. The baby head timepiece refers to the eternal repeating notion and circle of life.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Shahroud Ghahani is an Iranian-Australian interdisciplinary artist based on Gadigal land. Her artworks bridge together rich images from disparate cultures and her experiences of them. She holds a Master of Art from the University of New South Wales Arts, Design and Architecture and a Bachelor of Design in Visual Communication from University of Technology Sydney. Shahroud's work has been exhibited in galleries across Sydney and regional New South Wales. Her practice explores representations of the female body and themes of beauty, the grotesque, and identity within Eastern and Western traditions. She was the winner of the Grace Cossington Smith National Biennial Art Award in the local artist category in 2024. She was a finalist in the Gosford Art Prize in 2024 and 2023, receiving a Commendation award. Shahroud has been selected for the Fisher's Ghost Art Prize 2023 and 2022, FLOW Contemporary Art Prize 2023, Arts in the Valley Art Prize 2021, Hawkesbury Art Prize 2021 and 2018 and 2019 Kudos Emerging Artist + Designer Award.



LEFT: Shahroud Ghahani, *Ardent Mother* (detail), 2024, paper collage and mixed media on board  
Image courtesy of the Artist

# WeiZen Ho

*Purge II*, 2024, sculptural installation generated and modified in two durational public performances with butterfly pea flowers, turmeric root, cooked glutinous black rice, blotting paper, handmade papers, wooden frame and costume

## ABOUT THE ARTWORK

There is something that we deeply hunger for when we live outside our own culture. We yearn to speak in our own tongue, and often push aside social etiquette when we do encounter someone who is conversant in it. The most common transference of this 'cultural hunger' is by way of food. It is this image that WeiZen attempts to convey and expand upon, in her enactment, through introspective and embodied ontological exploration.

*Purge* was presented in 2023 as a 20-minute public work on the public pavement of Grace Exhibition Space in Manhattan, New York. By chewing raw turmeric and butterfly pea flowers to extract colours which were blown and dribbled through a bamboo straw onto blotting papers, WeiZen engaged in a performance 'marking' process.

*Purge II* will occupy an open process over 3 hours at Art Space on The Concourse in Chatswood. This act of masticating a higher-than-normal quantity of food ingredients used in recipes from her home environment is akin to excavating her cultural memory body. The materials employed are turmeric root, butterfly pea flowers, cooked glutinous black rice, blotting papers, handmade papers, dowels, glass bottles and jars.

When a simple symbolic action is formalised, and repeated (continuously) over a sufficient duration, it can subtly transform the atmosphere and image, shifting its meaning-making, re-framing it and the surrounding space into something else. Accompanied by an altered consciousness in the performer, it affects the witnesses to the energetic changes and dynamic oscillation takes place. This phenomenon can facilitate the experience of deep emotions and insights, which are often ineffable, requiring the suspension of our usual assumptions regarding things.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

WeiZen has been devising and presenting open-disciplinary performances since 1999. Her practice has expanded through music-visual concerts, into solo and participatory works which intersect performance art, ritual and installation. These works employ significant accoutrements and deep imagery to coalesce relationships between body, voice/sound and site.

Recently returned from a Rotterdam research, WeiZen explored the framework of Being and Place with local residents through Walk with me, Rotterdam, for Performance Art Event (PAE). She adapted *Stories from the Body (SFTB) #1* into a participatory work, utilising the public space surrounding the sculpture 'Maman', and the North Wing site, for the opening and closing programme for the Louise Bourgeois exhibition at AGNSW. WeiZen and Ryuichi Fujimura also devised a 3-hour performance titled *Pink Regensis of the Curse*, for the lower grounds of White Bay Power Station at the EDGE Inner West, 24th Biennale of Sydney (2024).

Thank you to Mandy Burgess and Dinah Beeston from Primrose Paper Arts for their support and guidance in the paper-making process.



ABOVE: WeiZen Ho, *Purge* (detail), 2024, sculptural installation generated and modified in two durational public performances with butterfly pea flowers, turmeric root, cooked glutinous black rice and blotting paper. Image courtesy of the Artist

# Mehwish Iqbal

*Tombstones - Series 2*, 2024, paper, silkscreen, collograph, hand-embroidery and beads

## ABOUT THE ARTWORK

*Tombstones* is my creative response to an immersive cultural experience with Middle Eastern, Turkish, and Mexican communities through artist-in-residence programs in the United States and Turkey. The work evolved from conversations about life, death, and the ritualistic and celebratory aspects of transitioning to another realm. My visit to Karacaahmet Cemetery in Istanbul, with its beautiful marble carvings and sculptural hats indicating an individual's rank and poetic inscriptions, inspired me to explore how different cultures commemorate this transition through ritualistic practices.

Similarly, my participation in various Mexican festivals and informal conversations with locals revealed the rich complexity and cultural nuances surrounding the departure of a loved one. These interactions highlighted how death becomes a performative act of ritualistic homage.

The visual vocabulary of *Tombstones* celebrates the richness of color, culture, clothing, language, and natural elements deeply embedded in these communities. It reflects these cultural elements through a vernacular and tactile approach. The work also features children's hats, symbolizing the transmission of social and cultural history, and clothing as an heirloom that preserves ongoing memory.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Mehwish Iqbal is a multidisciplinary Australian artist whose practice incorporates printmaking, painting, textiles, sculpture and installation.

Iqbal holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts, National College of Arts, and a Masters of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales. She was the first recipient of the Viktoria Marinov award, a finalist in the Blake Prize, Hobart Art Prize, Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize, Fisher Ghost Art Prize and Paramor Prize. She has shown extensively in various art fairs and biennales across Australia, the United States, Turkey, Asia and Europe. Her work is held in important private collections and institutions including the Museum of Contemporary Art, Australia.

Iqbal's current research examines the geopolitical scenarios giving rise to the influx of refugee and migrant diaspora, commodification of human agency, monopoly of power-play, hybrid identities and their complex reception in alien environments. She explores the interdependent relationship of individuals with their natural surroundings, dissecting a parallel landscape that explores the acceptance and rejection of new members in foreign territories.



ABOVE: Mehwish Iqbal, *Tombstones - Series 2*, 2024, paper, silkscreen, collograph, hand-embroidery and beads

Photo: Mim Sterling

Credit: Creative Australia

Image courtesy of the Artist



# Marikit Santiago

*Renaissance*, 2018, acrylic, oil and pyrography on ply

## ABOUT THE ARTWORK

*Renaissance* intricately fuses religious iconography and Renaissance art with the spectacle of modern celebrity culture to reconceptualise the symbolism of motherhood. In this work, Santiago integrates her own image into a montage that juxtaposes the Virgin Mary and Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus* (1485-86) with Beyoncé's widely publicised announcement of the birth of her twins. Adorned with a veil and framed by flowers, Santiago embodies maternal sacrifice, probing the representation and contemporary interpretation of traditional female roles.

This artistic transformation challenges entrenched gender symbols prevalent in religious and cultural narratives while illuminating the dynamic evolution of personal identities through the repetition of cultural rituals. These rituals, spanning media consumption, celebrity worship and societal expectations of gender roles, collectively forge a pervasive cultural practice that moulds our self-perceptions and societal interactions.

*Renaissance* transcends its role as a mere visual reinterpretation of maternal iconography; it engages in a deeper discourse on the mechanisms through which individuals negotiate and affirm their identities within the fabric of contemporary society. Through her compelling synthesis of imagery, Santiago invites viewers to contemplate the rituals that sculpt our cultural identities, urging a critical reassessment of their function in shaping and transmitting societal values.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Marikit Santiago's practice signally focuses on overlaying her lived Filipina-Australian experience onto the canon of Western art history. Her work is unquestionably personal (compositions depict her family and are made with her children) and undeniably courageous (self-portraits are neither idealised nor stylised).

Marikit Santiago (b. Melbourne, 1985) lives and works in Parramatta, Sydney, Australia. She won the prestigious Sir John Sulman Prize at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 2020 and was a three-time finalist for the institution's Archibald Prize (2016, 2021, 2023). In 2024, she was announced as the recipient of the La Prairie Art Award, in which her work *A Seat at the Table (Magulang)* and *A Seat at the Table (Kapatid)* (2023) was acquired by the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

Her work has been the subject of numerous solo museum exhibitions including *The kingdom, the power*, Bendigo Art Gallery (2023), *We Eat This Bread*, Fairfield City Museum and Gallery, Fairfield (2022 - 2023), and *For Us Sinners*, 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Haymarket (2022).

Marikit Santiago is represented by The Something Machine, New York.

RIGHT: Marikit Santiago,  
*Renaissance*, 2018,  
acrylic, oil and pyrography on ply  
Image courtesy of the Artist



# Phaptawan Suwannakudt

*Three Worlds*, 2009, acrylic on canvas

## ABOUT THE ARTWORK

Suwannakudt's work is an exploration of her cultural identity and place within the traditions of both Thailand and Australia. Her early work involved incorporating Thai names and Buddhist imagery into her art, creating a personal space within her new environment. Later, she began using written text as a medium; the series of the work *Three Worlds* drawing inspiration from ancient Buddhist texts Traibhumikatha.

The Traibhumikatha describes an ancient cosmology of three realms of existence and the cycle of life and death which applies to the practice of Buddhism in Thailand when monks can enter the Niravana which is the realm of non-form where one reaches Sunatta and avoids being reborn to the cycle.

One key question during the ordination which originates from the Tripitaka, is "Manusso si?" (Are you a person?), as monks are forbidden from ordaining if they are not human. Suwannakudt explores the concept of the Naga, a mythical serpent-like creature, and its status within Buddhist tradition.

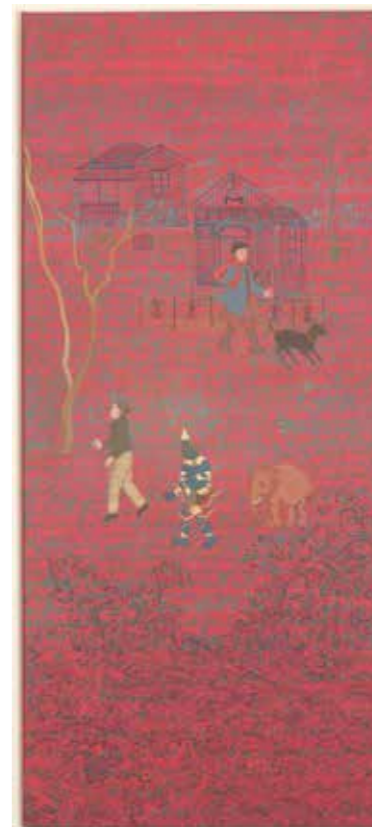
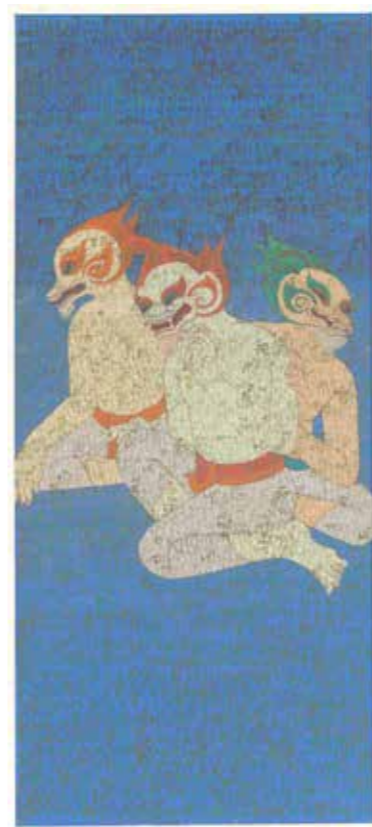
A ritual practice in Thai Buddhism during the ordination ceremony, "Naga" refers to a man preparing for ordination. Thus, "Naga" also means "human beings accepted into the monastic sect." This tradition originates from the Tripitaka, which describes how a Naga once disguised himself as a monk but was later caught. The Naga then requested that all future ordinands be called Naga.

The artist draws a parallel between the status of women, who are not allowed to ordain as monks, and the Naga, both considered "other" within the traditional Buddhist framework.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Phaptawan Suwannakudt (b. 1959, Thailand), based in Sydney, trained as a mural painter with her father, Paiboon Suwannakudt. She graduated from Silpakorn University and led temple mural painting teams in Thailand. Involved in women's art projects, she completed an Master of Visual Arts at Sydney College of the Arts. Her interdisciplinary work spans painting, sculpture, and installation, addressing socio-political issues, empathy, and cross-cultural dialogue, often informed by Buddhism and women's issues. Phaptawan has exhibited widely, including at the 18th Biennale of Sydney, the Bangkok Art Biennale, the Jakarta Biennale, documenta15 and most recently in Lahore Biennale 2024. Her works are in major public collections, such as the Art Gallery of New South Wales and the National Gallery Singapore.

Phaptawan Suwannakudt is represented by Art Atrium Gallery, Sydney



Phaptawan Suwannakudt, *Three Worlds* (detail), 2009, acrylic on canvas  
Image courtesy of the Artist

# Jayanto Tan

*kitchen tales from the celestial garden*, 2024, ceramic, incense, paper and pandan liquid

## ABOUT THE ARTWORK

In my practice, I often return to my family archive of memories and memorabilia for inspiration. For me, it is a way of remembering and reconnecting from fragmented past with my heritage. As a young child, I witnessed my mother cooking and preparing offering to my father. I frequently look for a family ritual, an authentic recipe, an object, a sign and a trace that reminds me of their presence in my life. I spiritually engage in a long conversation with my ancestors in the process of my practice.

In response to the theme of ritual within the *Unbroken Gestures* exhibition, I created a new series of pandan drawings that are inspired by the Double Happiness symbol to accompany the ceramic artwork representing the cooking of fish. My idea is referencing the memory association with smell—the fragrance surrounding family whilst together cooking in the kitchen. As a child, my mother would ask me to harvest the pandan leaves and fish from our little farm. These routine rituals remind me of her generosity and kindness. Through my current art practice, I attempt to keep these rituals and memories alive.

My drawing of the Double Happiness symbol—which is composed of two Chinese characters for joy—is typically used as a symbol to celebrate marriage. It is often found on decorative wedding items and embossed in bright gold foil on auspicious red envelopes. I have deviated from the traditional symbol by drawing its double form and intertwining lines to speak instead of the harmony and balance found in other forms of kinship, such as same-sex love. My interpretation of the symbol is an homage to the loved ones who are always in our hearts.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Jayanto Tan is a Gadigal-based visual artist who was born and raised in a small town in North Sumatra, Indonesia. His practice draws on his family history and diasporic background, blending Eastern and Western mythologies with the contemporary world and current events. Using ceramic sculptures, found objects, authentic recipes, performances and workshops, his work often opens dialogue with community and investigates how hybrid cultures can create new identities of possibility and hope. He won the 2021 Georges River Sculpture Art Prize and Highly Commended for the 2023 Fisher's Ghost Award (Contemporary category). He has conducted arts projects and workshops with diverse communities and museums, including the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Maitland Regional Art Gallery and WorldPride 2023. Jayanto holds a Master of Fine Arts from the National Art School.

Jayanto Tan is represented by Art Atrium, Sydney.



LEFT: Jayanto Tan, *kitchen tales from the celestial garden* (detail), 2024, ceramic and incense  
Image courtesy of the Artist

# Truc Truong

*Have a Supreme Day*, 2024, single-channel video with sound

## ABOUT THE ARTWORK

Truc Truong's video work, *Have a Supreme Day*, interlaces personal experience, cultural identity, and Vietnam's historical complexities. Through a rich visual and auditory collage, Truong explores counterfeit culture, the legacies of imperialism, and the intimate rituals of Vietnamese mourning.

The title playfully nods to the prevalence of counterfeit designer goods in Vietnam, setting up an exploration of authenticity versus imitation. The backdrop, reminiscent of the Louis Vuitton pattern, serves as a canvas for Truong's reflections on French colonisation and the interaction between global brands and local identities.

A central motif is the rooster, symbolising both Vietnamese mourning rituals and spiritual awakening. Truong contrasts rooster imagery with scenes from her grandfather's funeral, encouraging viewers to reflect on life, death, and the respectful, communal practices of Vietnamese mourning. These rituals—cooking for the deceased, talking to

them, keeping them company, and playing their favorite music—reveal a profound connection between the living and the dead, emphasising the enduring presence of the departed in the lives of the living.

The sound in *Have a Supreme Day* is deeply personal, featuring a chant sung by a shaman during the burial and awakening rituals for Truong's grandfather. This chant, rooted in Vietnamese tradition, adds a haunting dimension to the narrative, linking the spiritual with the material and the individual with the collective.

Truong also engages with Mandy Martin's 1975 work, *The Drive of the US is to Replace the Traditional Status Values of the Village Such as Writing Great Poetry with New Ones Like Owning a TV Set*, exploring the impact of external influences on cultural values and identity and the tension between tradition and modernity.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Truc Truong, based on Kaurna land (South Australia, Adelaide), explores Eastern and Western thought through her art. Her work, rooted in play and animism, reimagines everyday objects and tackles themes of love, power, family and spirituality, influenced by colonial legacies and her Vietnamese heritage.

Truong graduated from the University of South Australia with a Bachelor of Art and Design (Honours) in 2022. In the year following she was selected for the ACE Studio Program, Adelaide, and Primavera exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney. Truong has also recently exhibited at Gertrude Contemporary, Melbourne, 2024; Casula Powerhouse, Sydney, 2024; The Condensery, Toogoolawah, 2024; ACE, Adelaide, 2023; MCA, Sydney, 2023; Post Office Projects, Adelaide, 2023; 4A Centre for Contemporary Art, Sydney, 2021; and PICA, Perth, 2020.



ABOVE: Truc Truong, *Have a Supreme Day*, 2024, video still  
Image courtesy of the Artist

# Katie Louise Williams, PhD

*Return*, 2023, video documentation with sound and photographs of performance in Boisbuchet, France  
Photographs: Yara Haydar

## ABOUT THE ARTWORK

The work *Return* was created during a 2023 residency in Boisbuchet, a chateau that sits on 150 hectares of farmland and orchards fed by the Vienne River in France. Boisbuchet has hosted international artists, designers and architects for over fifty years, allowing a space for open-ended creative exchange.

*Return* was conceived as a socially engaged artwork that connected participants from around the world, who took part in the ritual of releasing a flower that had cultural significance to them. Returning the flower into the river, with the intent to coalesce it with its source, the water from which it came. Engaging participants in a process of foraging in nature, then intuitively choosing a flower or part of a plant that contained symbolic personal meaning. The personal became the collective in a ceremonial ritual of release. This ritual fostered a profound spiritual interconnection between the participants and the natural environment.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Katie Louise Williams is a Sydney-based Contemporary artist living in Castlecrag. She holds a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and Bachelor of Visual Arts (first class honours) from Sydney College of the Arts (University of Sydney) and was the Australian Postgraduate Award recipient, along with the international painting ambassador award recipient.

Her artistic practice is focused on socially engaged works that employ forms of painting, performance, and installation, incorporating audience action as the living material of her work.

As a contemporary artist Williams has exhibited in Australia at galleries such as AGNSW, Roslyn Oxley Gallery 9, Town Hall Gallery Melbourne and at multiple ARIs including Peloton, MOP and Alaska. She has worked and exhibited internationally at the Banff Centre of the Arts in Alberta Canada, The Prague Quadrennial of Performance, Design and Space, and at the London Transart Triennial.

Williams served on the board of directors at Articulate Project Space in Leichhardt, and worked as the director of the Redlands Konica Minolta Art Prize.



LEFT: Katie Louise Williams, *Return*, 2023, video still of performance in Boisbuchet, France  
Photo: Yara Haydar. Image courtesy of the Artist

**Purge II**

12pm – 3pm

SATURDAY 7 SEPTEMBER and

SATURDAY 14 SEPTEMBER

ART SPACE ON THE CONCOURSE

A performance examining symbolic actions and cultural hunger by WeiZen Ho

Witness the creation of WeiZen Ho's artwork *Purge II* in the *Unbroken Gestures* exhibition. By bringing together food materials, mastication,



WeiZen Ho, *Purge*, 2023, photograph of public performance at Grace Exhibition Space, Manhattan, as part of New York Live Art Tour 8, *Immersive*. Photo by Beate Linne. Image courtesy of the Artist

bodily movement and respiratory force, WeiZen enacts the yearning and deep hunger associated with living outside one's own culture.

*Purge II* will occupy an open process over three hours, at Art Space on The Concourse in Chatswood. This act of masticating a higher-than-normal quantity of food ingredients used in recipes from her home environment is akin to excavating her cultural memory body.



LEFT: Jayanto Tan, *Tea Ceremony in The Celestial Garden*, 2024, Photograph of performance as part of Tea Exchange at the Chinese Garden of Friendship. Photo: Emma Silwanis. Image courtesy of the Artist

**Tea Ceremony in the Celestial Garden**

1.30pm – 2pm

SATURDAY 21 SEPTEMBER

ART SPACE ON THE CONCOURSE

A performance about coming together, lamenting loved ones and sharing cultural knowledge by Jayanto Tan

Taking place in conjunction with the installation work *kitchen tales from the celestial garden*, Jayanto has created the lament of a tea ceremony performance that echoes the sound of a loved one. The performance of gathering and drinking the green tea whilst creating a magical sound from teacups collected from community, symbolises the act of sharing cultural knowledge. Embracing the tale of the past brings us to the present to gain better understanding for the future.

**Unbroken Gestures Curators Tour**

2pm – 3pm

SATURDAY 21 SEPTEMBER

ART SPACE ON THE CONCOURSE

Discover more about the exhibition in English, Mandarin or Cantonese

Co-curators Cassandra Hard Lawrie and Faye Chen will provide a curators' tour of the exhibition, with language translation in both Mandarin and Cantonese available.

**Register**

[VisualArt@Willoughby.nsw.gov.au](mailto:VisualArt@Willoughby.nsw.gov.au)

**Enquiries**

[cassandra.hard-lawrie@willoughby.nsw.gov.au](mailto:cassandra.hard-lawrie@willoughby.nsw.gov.au)

(02) 9777 7972



*Unbroken Gestures* is a Willoughby City Council curated exhibition in partnership with Emerge Festival 2024

**FREE**

**Enquiries: Cassandra Hard Lawrie, Curator & Visual Arts Coordinator**  
**Cassandra.Hard-Lawrie@Willoughby.nsw.gov.au (02) 9777 7972**

ABOVE: Mehwish Iqbal, *Tombstones - Series 2*, 2024, paper, silkscreen, collograph, hand-embroidery and beads  
Photo: Mim Sterling. Credit: Creative Australia. Image courtesy of the Artist

## WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU

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We appreciate your feedback.  
*Thank you!*

[www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au/arts](http://www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au/arts)

### ART SPACE ON THE CONCOURSE

(Next to box office)  
409 Victoria Avenue, Chatswood

#### Opening Hours:

Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday: 11am-5pm  
Friday and Saturday: 11am-8pm

- Chatswood NSW
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**EMERGE**  
FESTIVAL 2024

